(c) The LCA has large number of State-of-the-art components, assemblies and subsystems and also the flight software of highly complex nature which are required to be extensively tested and evaluated for their airworthiness, before conducting the first flight so that any likely problem is identified and eliminated at the pre-flight stage itself. This is a time consuming exercise of essential nature and its under advanced stage of accomplishment.

Declassification of INA Files

20. SHRI DEBABRATA BISWAS: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that he has recently declassifed a number of INA files and records and ordered them to be sent to the National Archives for public inspection and study;

(b) if so, what were the criteria adopted to declassify these documents;

(c) whether it is also a fact that there are still several thousands of files which have not been classified and still kept in his Ministry as "Secret records";

(d) if so, the reasons therefor and whether these records are proposed to be reviewed; and

(e) if answer to part (d) above is in the negative, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) In 1997, Ministry of Defence constituted a committee of officials to examine the INA records in its custody taking into consideration the sensitiveness of these records in relation to National security, relations with foreign countries and potential of raising controversies from various angles. Based on the recommendation of the committee, the INA records were declassified and transferred to the National Archives of India in August, 1997.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

Chinese threat on Indian Border

21. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY:
DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether China and Burma have become a constant threat on India's border both at sea and on land;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps proposed to counter the threat?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) China maintains the largest standing army in the world and is a nuclear weapon state. It has also undertaken military modernisaton programmes incldding the augmentation of its nuclear arsenal. It is also upgrading its logistic and infrastructure facilities in the India-China border areas. China is assisting Pakistan in their nuclear programme and missile programme. The defence relations between China & Myanmar also have a bearing on India's security.

All developments which affect India's national security are constantly monitored and reviewed and necessary measures are taken, as required, to maintain defence preparedness.

It will not be appropriate to disclose further details in the interest of our national security and relations with neighbouring countries.

ISI funding insurgency in Tamil Nadu

22. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have enough evidence of complicity of the Inter Services Intelligence of Pakistan in funding insurgency in Tamil Nadu as reported in the Pioneer of April 16, 1998;

(b) if so, how far back in history this evidence goes; and

(c) Government's reaction to effectively curb and prevent Insurgency in that part of the country and such ISI complicity in cross border terrorism?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) Recent happenings in Tamilnadu including the serial bomb blasts in Coimbatore on February 14, 1998 suspected to have been engineered by some froeign agencies are subject matter of investigation by a Commission of Inquiry headed by Justice P.R. Gokulakrishanan, former Chief Justice of Gujarat.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Government is aware of the sinister designs of ISI of Pakistan to carry out espionage, subversion and sabotage in India in a clandestine manner and is taking all necessary steps to combat and frustrate such objective by gearing up the intelligence machinery, sharing of intelligence and co-ordinated action by the concerned Central and State agencies, strengthening the deployment of Para-Military Forces at strategic locations, intensified coastal as well as inland patrolling, construction of border fencing and flood-lighting in vulnerable stretches of the Indo-Pak border.

Dialogues with North East Insurgents

23. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI JALALUDIN ANSARI:
SHRI GAYA SINGH:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether during his North-East tour in April this year, the Prime Minister not only offered to hold talks with North-East insurgents but also to accommmodate their demands by way of amendments to the Constitution; and

(b) If so, what are the precise promises of the talks offered?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) and (b) The Prime Minister had, during his visit to Assam in April, extended an invitation to insurgent groups to come forward and hold talks to bring about peace in the region. The Prime Minister in his Press Statement at Guwahati on 15th April, 1998 had stated; "To all those who have strayed from the paths to togetherness, whether in Assam or other States of the North East, I extend an invitation: come forward; let us discuss, my Government is committed to holding talks, to a restoration of peace; let us do so within the four corners of our Constitution".

The Prime Minister also stated that if necessary the Constitution could also be amended to find the solution to the problem.

Changes in the functioning of Police

24. SHRI SANJAY DALMIA:
DR. MOHAN BABU:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have been contemplating to bring about changes in the functioning of police;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when a final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) to (c) As "Police" and "Public Order" are State subjects as per the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India, it is essentially for the State Govenments to bring about changes in the functioning of their respective police forces. Within the Constitutional limitations, however, the Central Government has been writing to the State Governments emphasising the need to bring about such changes. The Stress laid by the Central Government has been on modification of the existing recruitment and training practices in the States and modernisation of their intelligence, weaponry and communication systems in order to keep pace with times. Apart from advisories, the Central Government has been providing financial assistance to the States through its scheme of